

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Wayside Interpretive Plan Collegiate Peaks Scenic & Historic Byway

The Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board (the “Heritage Board”) invites submittal of proposals for a Wayside Interpretive Plan for the Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway / Chaffee County Heritage Area.

Proposals shall be submitted to the Chaffee County Heritage Area Board no later than 4:00 pm, April 30, 2010. Proposals may be mailed to P.O. Box 1522, Salida, CO 81201.

Introduction

With the establishment of the Chaffee County Heritage Area in 2004 and the Collegiate Peaks Scenic & Historic Byway in 2005, Chaffee County has demonstrated that the county’s natural, cultural and scenic resources, history and historic sites hold significant importance to residents and they make a strong contribution to the county’s sense of place. Upholding the rural nature of the county is a high priority, as is preserving the individual heritage resources that contribute to the unique character of the area. A Heritage Area is a region in which residents, businesses, and governments join together to preserve, promote and celebrate their heritage, culture, and natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

One of the first steps after gaining Byway/Heritage Area designation was to produce the Chaffee County Heritage Area / Collegiate Peaks Scenic & Historic Byway Management Plan. This document was completed and approved by the Chaffee County Board of Commissioners in 2008. One finding was the need for an integrated framework for education and interpretation of the Heritage Area and Byway. The purpose of the Plan’s Wayfinding and Interpretive Strategy is to set forth a consistent county-wide approach for the interpretation of the scenic, natural, agricultural, cultural, archeological, and historical assets of the Chaffee County Heritage Area. The objectives of that Strategy are as follows

1. Educate and inform visitors and residents about Chaffee County Heritage Area’s natural environment, and its important scenic, natural, agricultural, cultural, historical, archeological, and recreational resources
2. Assist in preservation and protection of the Heritage Area and its significant heritage resources by telling its important stories
3. Convey that the Chaffee County Heritage Area is a friendly and attractive destination built upon a pattern of agricultural, natural and cultural history that can be experienced through exploration, adventure, and learning
4. Provide direction for consistency of signage and identify the optimal locations and types of signage to direct visitors and residents to the natural and historic resources along the Scenic Byway and within the Heritage Area
5. Suggest ways of “retrofitting” existing waysides/signage with Byway information

6. Determine observation pullout areas and features of the Byway that need enhancement to ensure safety and ease for visitors and residents as they enjoy the historic resources and natural environment of the Byway and Heritage Area.
7. Identify areas along the Byway that are dangerous to pedestrians and bicyclists and suggest recommendations for safety improvements
8. Work collaboratively with public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and private groups that already provide educational, recreational, and interpretive experiences to residents and visitors

What Defines Chaffee County?

Chaffee County is located in south-central Colorado in the Upper Arkansas River Valley. The county encompasses just over 1,000 square miles and, according to the 2000 census, roughly 16,240 people populate the county. The area is endowed with a diversity of historic resources including archeological and historic sites, agricultural, railroad and mining cultural traditions and land use patterns reflecting these histories. The county offers major tourism attractions based on historic resources, including historic downtowns, mining districts, bridges, school houses, prison facilities, homestead homes and outbuildings, ore processing structures, and remnants of railroad routes. Some surviving buildings and structures reflecting this history have already been accurately surveyed and recorded; others will be addressed through action items in the Management Plan. Information from these surveys will be available to County and municipal officials and groups committed to preservation.

The settling of Chaffee County was characterized by a rich history embracing the Ute Indians, Spanish explorers, fur trappers, miners, ranchers and railroad workers. Signs of the evolution of Chaffee County's cultural heritage are evident throughout the county, ranging from Native American camping sites, historic railroad routes in the rocky hills of the Fourmile area and mining remnants including chert quarries and crude early ore-crushers called arrastras. Intricate historic ditches provide water to the valley's broad agricultural lands, irrigating local hay fields and watering livestock on ranches in continuous operation for more than 100 years.

Historic stagecoach trails, railroad routes, early motor ways and the remnants of a late nineteenth century smelter parallel the Arkansas River's path, evoking tales of early explorers, settlers and miners who sought adventure and a new life as well as ore and minerals. The historic downtowns of Buena Vista, Salida and Poncha Springs, each with its own unique character, date from the time of the railroads in the late 1800s and are steeped in historic ambiance. Neighborhoods of historic Victorian homes surround the busy downtowns and these communities remain close-knit in their common heritage.

The county is also host to world-class natural resources along the Continental Divide and its Fourteeners, and recreation including rafting and fishing focused on the Arkansas River. These resources and modern recreational use pattern are also a part of the county's heritage which the Wayside Interpretive Plan must address.

A strong and growing consensus among county residents, governments and businesses favors protection of all these heritage resources which define our current sense of community by employing creative and sensible solutions to retain and attract residents, appropriate business development and tourism.

Description of Byway Wayside Interpretive Plan Project

The Heritage Board has secured funding from the Federal Highway Administration's Byway program to hire a professional firm to provide a plan for developing wayside interpretive sites identified in the Chaffee County Heritage Area / Collegiate Peaks Scenic & Historic Byway Management Plan (which serves as the Byway's Corridor Management Plan).

A series of interpretive waysides are proposed along major travel routes and at sites where opportunities exist to provide information related to the Heritage Area and to complement material already presented. Interpretive waysides would expand or improve existing facilities or would be developed as new waysides in locations considered as missed opportunities. An interpretive wayside would typically include a small parking area, safe ingress and egress into the wayside, educational and interpretive media, and a means to explore or further enjoy the setting such as a trail connection, a picnic site, or a photographic opportunity. Interpretive media would include practical wayfinding information, panels or signs conveying interpretive material on the history of the site or its surroundings and its significance, the official map (developed as part of the Byway brochure in 2009) of the Heritage Area for orientation, and visitor seating if appropriate.

For locations that already provide facilities such as parking, interpretive signs, and amenities, information about heritage resources associated with the immediate surroundings and identification of the site as part of the Heritage Area would be added. In some cases, the only need might be the addition of the Heritage Area logo. At others, new interpretive panel(s) would convey Heritage Area information. At a few, all of the typical wayside facilities listed above would be new improvements.

The chosen firm must maintain ongoing communication with local and regional Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) offices to determine wayside eligibility requirements and incorporate future plans for road improvements. The Wayside Interpretive Plan should consider CDOT projects/recommendations in all recommendations contained in the Plan.

Wayside planning project partners include the Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board, GARNA, Colorado Department of Transportation, Chaffee County, and the municipalities of Buena Vista, Salida, and Poncha Springs.

For a detailed list of all planning tasks to be accomplished see below.

Goals of Project

The primary goal of this project is to develop a Wayside Interpretive Plan as part of the Wayfinding and Interpretive Strategy outlined in Chapter 5.0 the Heritage Area/Byway Management Plan. Please see Management Plan (available on loan by request or downloadable from garna.org/heritage/current-1.htm) for detailed objectives. Note that the scope of work is limited to the Interpretive Waysides subsection of Section 5.3 Interpretive Framework, but that the entire Chapter 5.0 provides the context for wayside development.

The Wayside Plan must incorporate key components in the Management Plan including

- The Intrinsic Qualities of the Heritage Area/Byway: Scenic beauty; natural diversity; agricultural lands; cultural, historical and archeological heritage and recreation (generally described in Chapter 3.0 Intrinsic Qualities of the Heritage Area/Byway)
- Established Character Zones and Priority Views (illustrated in Figure 5, Section 3.1)
- The six interpretive themes of the Heritage Area: Finding our Roots; Pushing Cattle; Recreation and Adventure; Making a High-Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry; Exploring our Valley: The Earliest Days; and Tapping the Water; The Lifeline of the West (defined in Section 5.3 Interpretive Framework)

The following is a list of locations for wayside interpretation recommended in the Management Plan. It is not an exhaustive list - **the Wayside Interpretive Plan should propose others that were not indicated in the Management Plan and prioritize all locations to guide future projects.** Also note that no single location or interpretive wayside (below) is intended to portray all of the key components and interpretive themes. The Management Plan suggests certain interpretive themes for each site but the contractor may exercise professional judgment in accepting those recommendations, bearing in mind that the intention of the wayside development is to collectively implement the Wayside and Interpretive Strategy of the Management Plan.

Collegiate Peaks Scenic Overlook - Providing additional interpretive information related to the area's heritage at the existing Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) Collegiate Peaks Scenic Overlook is proposed. Interpretation of the Heritage Area would be integrated with the existing panels.

Arkansas River Interpretive Waysides - Several interpretive waysides are proposed along the Arkansas River where the AHRA provides facilities such as boater put-ins, rest rooms, camping and visitor information. Sites were selected that are easily accessible from the Byway, that have existing visitor facilities or have the potential to add visitor facilities, and that offer effective interpretive opportunities. These sites include the following

- Clear Creek/Stagecoach Road (a crossing of the Midland Railroad and Leadville Stage Road incorporating an 1876 William Henry Jackson panoramic view)
- Pine Creek (story of the Class V rapids and railroads—the DRG narrow and successor standard gauge, and the Midland Railroad)
- Ruby Mountain (including reference to the adjacent Browns Canyon Wilderness Study Area, among other stories)
- Hecla Junction
- East Salida
- Buena Vista River Park (Midland Railroad, adding the Heritage Area logo)
- Coors Boat ramp in Salida

Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway Interpretive Waysides - Five interpretive waysides are recommended along the Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway, including three sites that require improvements to existing facilities, and two new sites that would require

construction of all of the features of a typical wayside as identified above. The interpretive waysides include the following

- Leadville Stage Road Historic Wayside – interpretive panels installed in 2009, explore expansion of facilities
- Zebulon Pike Historic Wayside (hwy 285 at mile marker 132) – interpretive panels installed in 2009, explore expansion of facilities
- Smelter Historic Wayside – interpretive panels installed in 2009, explore expansion of facilities
- Hutchinson Homestead – work with Historic Salida Inc and the Town of Poncha Springs for an interpretive wayside at this site along US 50
- Explore additional interpretive sites along Byway and along the “Exploration Routes” featured in the Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway brochure

Poncha Pass Interpretive Wayside - One interpretive wayside is recommended along Poncha Pass, one possible locale is the top of the pass where byway/heritage information would be added to the existing information. The wayside will require the construction of all of the features described above.

Tasks To Be Completed

- Based on the Wayside and Interpretive Strategy, develop a Vision Statement describing the future condition of interpretation along the Byway, together with goals and objectives and criteria for setting priorities on development
- Undertake on-the-ground background research of all existing and potential (new) wayside sites including consultation with authorities and partners currently responsible for these sites
- Complete a draft Wayside Interpretive Plan including, but not limited to:
 - Complete map of entire Byway with all recommended wayside sites, new and improved existing
 - Individual wayside site analyses and plans including map of each new wayside site proposed, illustrative sketches and cost estimate so funds for final design and construction could be applied for
 - Suggestions for alternative technologies/media that could be used to compliment or take the place of waysides
 - Provide a description and recommended assignment of all agency, group, and individual responsibilities to implement recommended action items from the plan
- Present draft Wayside Interpretive Plan to the Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board in order for the Board to comment and offer specific feedback
- Conduct a public meeting in Chaffee County to present the draft Plan and gain feedback
- Revise Wayside Interpretive Plan based on all feedback from Heritage Board and public
- Present final Wayside Interpretive Plan and all components to the Heritage Board and County Commissioners at a Chaffee County Commissioner’s meeting

Documents and Services Available to the Selected Contractor

- List of potential agency, group and individual partners
- Chaffee County Heritage Area and Collegiate Peaks Scenic & Historic Byway Management Plan
- County and municipal GIS layers
- Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan, March 2000 (available as a PDF on <http://chaffeecounty.org/Page.aspx?PageID=2131>)
- Chaffee County Resolution No. 2004-45 (Establishing the Chaffee County Heritage Area)
- US Forest, BLM, AHRA, and Municipal Plans
- Chaffee County Land Use Code and Zoning Map (information available on <http://chaffeecounty.org/Page.aspx?PageID=2133>)
- Chaffee County Trails Master Plan, Jan 2003 (available as a PDF on <http://chaffeecounty.org/Page.aspx?PageID=250>)
- Sign Code
- Orientation tour with CC Heritage Area Advisory Board
- Meeting facilities (to be organized by the administrator at no cost)

Deliverables

There must be a negotiated approval cycle for deliverables. The following deliverables are required

- Brief monthly status reports including a summary of activities, contacts made, time spent in the field and emerging issues or problems needing input from the Heritage Board
- Two face to face meetings to gain input from the Heritage Board prior to submission of the Draft Interpretive Plan
- Draft Wayside Interpretive Plan of proposed improved and new wayside sites within the Heritage Area and Byway corridor including all elements described above - 12 paper copies and 1 electronic copy
- Final Wayside Interpretive Plan - 25 paper copies and 25 CD copies

Funding

Not to exceed \$17,000

Funding for the project is made possible through a grant from the Federal Highway Administration's Scenic Byway Program. Selected contractor must meet each Federal and State grant sub-contract and invoice requirements.

Selected contractor will be required to comply with and implement House Bill 1343. (Illegal Aliens and Public Contracts for Service)

Time Frame

Proposals shall be submitted to the Chaffee County Heritage Area Board no later than 4:00 pm, April 30, 2010.

Following evaluation of written proposals selected firms will be notified on or near May 12, 2010 to present an oral presentation via phone conference. Meeting date to be determined.

Competing firms will be notified on or near May 26, 2010 of final decision.

The chosen contractor will have **6 months** from date of contract to complete the work.

Proposal Parameters

All proposals shall, at a minimum include:

- Name, address and telephone number of firm or individual submitting the proposal
- Explanation of the proposal's approach to the tasks listed above
- A schedule of work with Deliverable dates
- Qualifications of the firm or individual submitting the proposal, including staff and subcontractor capabilities and experience with similar projects
- Description of previous work in Chaffee County and/or demonstrate familiarity with the natural and historic resources of the County
- Demonstration of experience working with the Colorado Department of Transportation on prior projects; experience working with the Colorado Scenic Byways program
- Three references for recent work of a similar nature and examples of final products of those projects
- Detailed proposed budget

Applicants shall submit nine paper copies of their proposal.

All costs to prepare and submit a response to this request shall be borne by the applicant.

Creative approaches, ideas, and methods are encouraged in responding to the RFP.

Evaluation and Selection Process

All proposals will be evaluated by the Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board. Selection will be based on the following criteria.

Phase One – Written Proposals

Applicants should prepare a written proposal which responds to the RFP as outlined. The RFP Selection Panel will evaluate written proposals and select no more than four firms for a phone interview.

Evaluation Criteria for Written Proposals

The following factors and their assigned points will form the basis for evaluating written proposals:

- Proposed approach 50 Points
- Experience of applicant 25 Points
- Logistics 10 Points
- Budget 15 Points

Phase Two - Interview

Based on evaluation from written proposals, the RFP section panel will conduct interviews over the phone. Final selection will be made based on the interviews using the same factors and point system as the written proposal phase.

Rejection of Proposals

The Board reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP or to cancel the RFP if it is in the best interest of the Chaffee County Heritage Area.

Contact

Interested parties may contact Alison Ramsey, Heritage Board administrator, at 719-539-5106 or info@garna.org

Attachments

- Chaffee County Resolution 2004-45 (available at www.garna.org/heritage/current-1.htm)
- Chaffee County Heritage Area and Collegiate Peaks Scenic & Historic Byway Management Plan Executive Summary (available at www.garna.org/heritage/current-1.htm)
- Collegiate Peaks Byway brochure (available at <http://collegiatepeaksbyway.org/Bywaybrochure.html>)
- Federal Register FHWA Docket No. 95-15 (available at <http://www.bywaysonline.org/program/reports/projects/appendix-b>)

Additional information is available at: www.chaffeecountyheritage.org